

**Town of Mansfield
CONSERVATION COMMISSION
Meeting of 18 19 December 2007
Conference B, Beck Building
MINUTES**

Members present: Robert Dahn, Peter Drzewiecki, Quentin Kessel, Scott Lehmann, John Silander, Frank Trainor. *Members absent:* Rachel Rosen, Sherry Roy (alt).

1. The meeting was **called to order** by Chair Quentin Kessel at 7:37p.
2. The **minutes** of the 28 November 07 meeting, with the addition of Lehmann's report on the 13 November 07 IWA Field Trip, were approved.
3. **Arthur's Pond revisited.** The Commission discussed the revised proposal for the Arthur's Pond subdivision (IWA 1383) and Kessel's draft comment on it. A larger conservation easement along Eagleville Brook (including steep slopes) addresses one of the Commission's concerns about the original proposal. However, the Commission remains critical of the yield plan, which calls for development with a significant impact on wetlands: a town road across the linear wetland, and town right-of-ways and set-backs that would push the proposed houses even closer to wetlands. It is true that wetlands impacts are mitigated in the proposal, but that is not legally relevant, since acceptability of the yield plan is a necessary condition for approving any proposal based on it. If the subdivision is to be approved despite these reservations, the Commission recommends that the linear wetland be protected by a conservation easement that prohibits tree-cutting and construction of private access roads across it. The Commission unanimously approved an amended version of Kessel's comment to this effect (motion: Dahn, Drzewiecki); see Attachment 1.
4. **Public hearings.** Kessel reported that he had attended the 03 December public hearing on Arthur's Pond in order to get the Commission's previous comments into the public record. The Commission wondered if it could arrange with PZC/IWA to have its comments on a submission automatically entered into the public record of any public hearing on it.
5. **Torrey property name.** The Commission unanimously approved Kessel's letter supporting designating open space land obtained from the Torrey family as the "Torrey Preserve"; see Attachment 2. Parks and Recreation Director Curt Vincente prefers not to name Town-acquired land after previous owners unless the land was donated, but the Commission agreed that naming this parcel the "Torrey Preserve" was an appropriate way to honor the Torrey family's contributions (in particular, those of G. Stafford Torrey) to the Town.
6. **Bylaws update.** Kessel's draft update of the Commission's bylaws was approved unanimously (motion: Silander, Dahn); it will be submitted to the Town Manager.

7. Recognition of charter members. At most two charter members of the Conservation Commission could now attend a Council meeting to be recognized, so Kessel suggested that recognition be broadened to members from the 1960s. The Commission agreed that this would be a good idea. Jennifer Kaufman will suggest to the Town Manager that recognition of such 'pioneering' members be on the agenda for the 28 January 08 Council meeting.

8. Adjourned at 8:39p.

Scott Lehmann, Secretary
21 December 07
Approved 16 January 08

Attachment 1

TO: MANSFIELD IWA/PZC
FROM: MANSFIELD CONSERVATION COMMISSION
DATE: 12/20/07
SUBJECT: ARTHUR'S POND SUBDIVISION (WRITTEN TESTIMONY FOR
THE PUBLIC HEARING)

The Mansfield Conservation Commission has reviewed the latest plans for the Arthur's Pond subdivision (map dated 12/13/07) and the reports on this project from Highland Soils (dated 12/11/07) and the Eastern Connecticut Conservation District (dated 11/29/07). The Conservation Commission remains concerned that the seven lots to be carved out of this marginal 22.4 acres represents an intensive use that may have a significant negative impact on the wetlands and the Eagleville Brook.

The first issue, of which we would like remind you, is that of the yield plan upon which this project is based. The Conservation Commission recommends against its approval. The primary reasons for this are the wetland crossing of the proposed Town Road branching off Separatist Road and its negative impact on the wetland to be crossed and the likely impact of the runoff from this road (and the house lots bordering Eagleville Brook) on Eagleville Brook.

Eagleville Brook is on the State 303 (d) List of Impaired Waters, and the DEP is obligated to work toward removing it from this list. The University (the primary cause of the brook's difficulties) and the Town have agreed to work toward this goal. In view of these existing problems, the Conservation Commission believes that either a Town road or a common driveway would have a significant negative impact on both the wetlands and Eagleville Brook. The road will add roadside runoff, sometimes concentrated storm road runoff, to the brook. The proximity of lots 4,5,6,and 7 to Eagleville Brook poses additional risks.

Another issue with the yield plan is that it is not clear to the Conservation Commission that the developer used the full width of the required right-of-way for local roads. If they did not, would the setbacks and building envelopes used on the yield plan push the building envelopes still further toward the wetlands (on the road to be constructed from North Eagleville Road) and toward Eagleville Brook (on the road to be constructed from Separatist Road)? We request that this be checked. Approval based upon an inadequate yield plan would be inappropriate. It may be that the proposed driveways would be less detrimental to the environment than full-width Town Roads might be; however, that is not upon which the approval of a subdivision is to be based.

With regard to the recent changes made to the plan by the developer: The Conservation Commission appreciates that the easement has been increased in width to include the steep slopes along Eagleville Brook and the partial easement along the linear wetland. We would like to see this easement extended along the linear wetland resulting in easements on lots 1,2 and 3, to further protect this wetland. Particular note was taken that the easement on lot 2 should restrict access to pedestrian access and any tree cutting should be done only with the approval of the Town IWA agent. We agree that rain gardens and the proposed check dams are good ideas and should lessen the impact of the proposed development; however, these proposed modifications do not address the important question of whether this development should be permitted in the first place, e.g., is the yield plan a realistic one?

Attachment 2

TO: JENNIFER S. KAUFMAN, PARKS COORDINATOR, TOWN OF MANSFIELD
FROM: MANSFIELD CONSERVATION COMMISSION
DATE: DECEMBER 19, 2007
SUBJECT: TORREY PRESERVE

At its December 19, 2007 meeting, the Conservation Commission voted unanimously that the open space purchased from the Torrey estate should continue to be associated with the Torrey name.

Without the cooperation of the Torrey family, this property would probably have gone to development. We are in complete agreement with the December letter from Vicki Wetherell to you supporting the retention of the Torrey name, e.g., to call it the Torrey Preserve. She notes that as early as 1979, Mrs. Torrey had informed Byron Janes (then chair of the Conservation Commission) of her wish to preserve public access to the Nipmuck Trail portion of the property.

The Conservation Commission considers it appropriate to honor the Torrey family, especially G. Safford Torrey in this way. This honor is justified not only because of their faithful stewardship of this property, but in recognition of a unique individual, G. Safford Torrey. Harvard educated with an advanced degree earned in France, you

have to wonder what brought him to a small school in Storrs. (Actually he was recruited about 1915 by another Harvard-trained botanist, Edmund Sinnott.) He reached the age of 100 years, and during his tenure in Mansfield he made numerous contributions to the Town and the University. His remains are located on the property.